

The COMMONWEAL

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The Meaning of Marshal Tito

IT WOULD BE very fascinating to write a book about those who, after having played a great rôle in the Third International, turned anti-Communist. How interesting would it be to describe the development of Souvarine from a member of the highest boards of the Comintern to a most informed and savage denouncer of Stalin, or to analyze the career of Doriot, who changed from a trigger-man of Moscow to the leader of a pro-Nazi group; or of Ruth Fischer, who is today the bitterest denouncer of the Red network, after having been the head of the German Communist Party.

It is certain that the Cominform, the successor of the Comintern, will contribute much material to such a book on Communists who have turned into vociferous haters of Stalin and Moscow. It is not unlikely that Marshal Tito will have a privileged position among such coat-changers. Suddenly the word of the Cominform, which unites nine European Communist parties,

has publicly excommunicated him. True, this step was prepared by confidential letters of the Soviet Communist party since March. Tito was accused of being nationalistic, reactionary, and a demagogic pseudo-radical, a hater of the Soviet Union and a betrayer of Communism. He and his followers, who dominate Yugoslavia and Yugoslav Communist party with its People's Front, refused to submit, and expelled those members of the Government who were on Moscow's side; finally the Cominform made the break public, and has moved its center from Belgrade to Bucharest.

Is this quarrel about Tito of great importance? Surely it shows that Moscow has to struggle to keep its henchmen together; even such an old Communist warhorse as Tito has now shown that there are limits to the taking of orders. He did not behave as his Bulgarian colleague Dimitroff, who weakly abandoned his policy when it was condemned by *Pravda*. Or did Tito have so many personal enemies that he had to be taught a lesson? In any case, Moscow will be able to control the quarrel. Most likely a compromise can be reached, despite all public statements and counter-statements. Tito may drop some of his followers, and accept Moscow's friends.

Rebecca West's opinion, that the Tito incident is a play with divided rôles, deserves consideration. Tito's sudden resistance can be used to fool the United States and England; he may get loans and concessions and then again make up with the Soviet Union. Even if he is dropped himself at a chosen moment, that would not change Moscow's game.

A truly anti-Communist movement under Tito's leadership is impossible; he has killed Mikhailovitch, the Serb leader; he has put in jail Stepinac, the Croat archbishop, and today he also claims to represent the truly Marxian-Leninist line allegedly betrayed by the Cominform. The Tito affair is a family quarrel amongst Stalin's followers; it may be exploited by a cautious policy and wise propaganda, but it would be unwarranted to regard this sensational incident involving Tito's relations with Moscow as the beginning of the end of the Red Empire.

East Side West Side

THESE are momentous days for the world's largest metropolis. Even as her citizens were frantically deserting Times Square, Fifth Avenue and the leafy paths of Central Park over the long, torrid week-end of the Fourth, the city herself was making history.

First, New York was abandoning the five-cent fare to which her successive political administrations had clung so fiercely for over forty years. New York is the last big American city to give

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way; only Boston and Los Angeles had held on until two years ago. So now this city's 4,800,000 daily fares on municipally operated lines are a dime in the subway and on the elevated, seven cents on surface lines and twelve cents for a combination journey. For the time being, two million more daily fares (on privately owned bus lines and the cooling and scenic Staten Island ferry) still cost only a nickel. But the number of new dime subway turnstiles which froze on the first day from coins corroded or bent was symbolic of the wrench experienced as the historic five-cent fare bowed out.

Simultaneously, what is intended to be the world's greatest airport opened at Idlewild, Queens, Long Island, July 1. Ironically enough, the receipts for the first three days by this quarter-billion-dollar development were exactly \$41.06. Yet within the first week the Peruvian International Airways was to make its first scheduled landing and departure, with Air France and KLM, the Royal Dutch Airline, soon to follow. This 4,900-acre tract, planned by the late Fiorello La Guardia to supplant the increasingly inadequate airport bearing his name, will have its grand opening with a Golden Jubilee Airshow, July 31 to August 8 (another inkling of the historic stage through which New York City now is passing).

Moreover, July 8 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of city-owned broadcasting station, WNYC. For a time this station was perhaps best known for Mayor La Guardia's inimitable talks to his people. In recent years it has made tremendous strides in developing musical programs. WNYC now unquestionably boasts the best recorded music broadcast from the New York area, while its American Music Festival each year provides a week or more devoted day and night to the works of leading new American composers—live and recorded programs—so well presented that no nightly attendance at concerts could equal it. To speak only of certain of its achievements in the field of music! Moreover, the cost to the individual taxpayer of these and other remarkable non-commercial broadcasting services is happily infinitesimal.

Finally, Candidate Dewey's announcement, on July 2, that he supports the sixty-five-million-dollar loan for building the United Nations headquarters on the site donated on the East River, virtually assures the permanent location of the UN in New York City. The House had failed to take the necessary action in the final frenzied wind-up in Washington, but now that both parties and both candidates are behind it, the appropriation can be counted on eventually. In the meantime work can be continued on the site either through an RFC allocation, if that is possible, or as a result of the efforts of public-spirited citizens.

In all, a truly historic week in a metropolis

that is not without its seamy side. A city in which millions are still condemned to live without sufficient air, light, sanitary facilities or satisfactory participation in constructive activities. A city compassing great extremes of poverty and wealth and sheltering a financial district whose parasitic tentacles stretch out to the productive areas of our West and South, not to mention the economically colonial areas of Latin America and other raw-material sources. A city which is the shopping and amusement center of the nation. A city which does not reproduce itself but remains dependent upon the influx of people from America's rural areas. A city where restrictive covenants and other devices continue to produce fearful crowding and acute racial tensions. For all that a city with its elements of greatness.

Polluted America

AMERICA is very polluted. This statement is damagingly true, taken even in the mostly strictly limited reference, speaking only of simple garbage and sewages. At this time of year, for instance, almost any hometown newspaper is full of scare stories about the number of germs per c.c. which are playing about in the waters where children, men and women want to go swimming. Oceans, bays and rivers from coast to coast, which were wonderful for Indians, have been made into damp booby traps by the progress of urban, industrial civilization. It's a great annoyance and a rotten sign.

One bill which Congress left behind it in the pre-Philadelphia fuss, and which President Truman signed into law in his post-Western spurt, was a health act designed to get ready to attack pollution of rivers and streams. It is a law to get ready to get ready. There is separate appropriation of \$75,000 to prepare a preliminary program. The preliminary program would not include work against pollution, but would get some of the background of the program set, as Congress might make appropriations. This would take five years at about \$25,000,000 per year. Hesitant as it is, this is the first "comprehensive" legislative effort by the Federal Government dealing with pollution. And it is accomplished as a "health" measure.

Just about when the President was signing this, governors of seven states and the representatives of another signed an Ohio River Pact, establishing a commission to check the pollution of the enormous Ohio water system (20,000,000 people; 200,000 square miles). It is expected that sewage-disposal plants will constitute the principal mechanism the new commission will push to purify the dirty waters. The commission is said, however, to have very small authority, and the pollution criteria set in the compact are not crystal clear by Indian standards. It will be some

time before brook trout are leaping over the rapids at Louisville and you can dip a bucket safely in front of Cincinnati.

Still, something is, apparently, getting started, and something that warrants all welcome. That the beginnings are slow and hesitant is not remarkable, for the problem of water pollution is large and complex; and it is organic, so a slow growing-up of the means and actions to solve it is perhaps appropriate and inevitable. The direction of development appears fairly plain.

Cleaning up the country's streams and rivers and ocean fronts cannot long be looked upon as a specifically health problem—at least in the professional, doctors and pills and germs sense of the term. The little and big waters affect the whole life and economy of the people and the continent. A few weeks ago, in telling the splendid story of H. A. Morgan of the Tennessee Valley Authority in *THE COMMONWEAL*, James Rorty gave a good appreciation of the concept of "human ecology," and that is the science, or philosophy, which rightly embraces the character and activity of water on and over and around the land, in its proper and practical relationship to man and laws and appropriations. If our nation's waters ran clear and cleanly from farm brook to the blue sea, it would mean that practically the whole problem of land use, conservation, town and country planning, and health and recreation had been solved. Water is a multi-iguous problem.

It is interesting that increasingly, as the people and the states and federal governments turn to work on particular pressing problems, such as unhealthy water, the indicated area of attack turns out to be a river valley.

The Warfare of Georges Bernanos

FRANCE has, in the past three-quarters of a century, had a queue of political artists. These exist, of course, in all countries, Dante is perhaps the sourest, and Swift the saddest, of their kind, but in France the succession from Lamartine through Zola, to St. Exupéry and St. John Perse, is become a tradition. Wherever and however such politically conscious artists exist, they are solitaires, profoundly unhappy beings, perpetually interiorly torn. Either they sacrifice their timeless creative imagination to the daily problem, and feel wasted and frustrated, over-anxious to trade their caviar for a mess of pottage; or they flee from the plethora of polemics to the ivory tower in order to husband their strength, and feel ashamed, anti-social shirkers. Always they are uneasy, either bored, or guilty: bored by the battle, lonely with it, or without. Of such, and one of the very greatest, was Georges Bernanos, who died in Paris on July 5th, aged 60.

Historically, just as Zola is inseparable from

L'Affaire Dreyfus, so is Bernanos from the Spanish Civil War. He began his political life as a Rightist and a Royalist, and, as a young man, was one of the most brilliant of the *Action Française* group. But even before the Papal condemnation of that paper, he had seen the totalitarian writing on the wall, and had forsworn his allegiance. As he wrote in this paper in the first of three articles in *Fascism*, in 1943: "ten years ago I kept denouncing the perilous fact that the spiritual authorities were supporting a sort of mystical concept of abandonment and defeatism, a sort of defeatism made up of resignation and the idea of expiation, a concept which was later on used against France by the Vichy hypocrites . . . then certain impostors writing in the French religious press who were sold out to Mussolini, accused me of impinging upon the rights of legitimate ecclesiastical authority and solemnly declared they were entirely willing to leave to the Church alone the task of investigating the facts . . . fascism has not even yet exhausted the patience . . . of the censors formerly so strict about Charles Maurras." Bernanos's experience in Majorca during the Spanish War led to his heart-rending and magnificent denunciation of Spanish fascism, "*Les Grands Cimetières sous la lune*," which, with Malraux's "*Man's Hope*," will remain perhaps the most outstanding of all the many books written about one of the most scriptogenic wars since Troy. As a result of his emotions, Bernanos went into exile in 1938, with his wife and six children. He found his way to Brazil, and there explored many remote regions, as also the hinterland of Paraguay. But strange lands and jungles cannot help him whose heart remains hiding at home, and Bernanos, after early joining De Gaulle, returned to France after the liberation, to find no happiness there.

Nor did he expect to find it. For he and François Mauriac are the team of Christian oxen who, yoked together in the public mind, pulled the creaking cart of French Catholic fiction out of the sugary slough exemplified by such classics as the "*Neuvaine de Colette*." Rejecting orange-flower syrup as a beverage unworthy the followers of One whose last drink was vinegar laced with hyssop, Bernanos vomited forth the lukewarm, crying, with the author of the Apocalypse, that he would they were either hot or cold. Glory, not happiness, he declared, is the Christian's goal, and the terrible God for Whom all live, loves no one as much as the sinner except the saint. Patiently, almost monotonously, in masterpiece after masterpiece, Bernanos put bitter aloes on the fingers of all nail-biting, thumb-sucking infantilists: this is your Faith, he showed them; this burning bush: and the test of the Christian is that the bush is not consumed, but is caught up into the incandescence.

Felix Culpa?

Evelyn Waugh reviews
Graham Greene's new novel*

OF MR. GRAHAM GREENE alone among contemporary writers one can say without affectation that his breaking silence with a new serious novel is a literary "event." It is eight years since the publication of "The Power and the Glory." During that time he has remained inconspicuous and his reputation has grown huge. We have had leisure to re-read his earlier books and to appreciate the gravity and intensity which underlie their severe modern surface. More than this, the spirit of the time has begun to catch up with them.

The artist, however aloof he holds himself, is always and specially the creature of the *zeitgeist*; however formally antique his tastes, he is in spite of himself in the advance guard. Men of affairs stumble far behind.

In the last twenty-five years the artist's interest has moved from sociology to eschatology. Out of hearing, out of sight, politicians and journalists and popular preachers exhort him to sing the splendours of high wages and sanitation. His eyes are on the Four Last Things, and so mountainous are the disappointments of recent history that there are already signs of a popular break-away to join him, of a stampede to the heights.

I find the question most commonly asked by the agnostic is not: "Do you believe in the authenticity of the Holy House at Loreto?" or "Do you think an individual can justly inherit a right to the labour of another?" but "Do you believe in Hell?"

Mr. Greene has long shown an absorbing curiosity in the subject. In "Brighton Rock" he ingeniously gave life to a theological abstraction. We are often told: "The Church does not teach that any man is damned. We only know that Hell exists for those who deserve it. Perhaps it is now empty and will remain so for all eternity." This was not the sentiment of earlier and healthier ages. The Last Judgment above the medieval door showed the lost and the saved as fairly equally divided; the path to salvation as exceedingly narrow and beset with booby-traps; the reek of brimstone was everywhere. Mr. Greene challenged the soft modern mood by creating a completely damnable youth. Pinkie of "Brighton Rock" is the ideal examinee for

entry to Hell. He gets a pure alpha on every paper. His story is a brilliant and appalling imaginative achievement but falls short of the real hell-fire sermon by its very completeness. We leave our seats edified but smug. However vile we are, we are better than Pinkie. The warning of the preacher was that one unrepentd slip obliterated the accumulated merits of a lifetime's struggle to be good. "Brighton Rock" might be taken to mean that one has to be as wicked as Pinkie before one runs into serious danger.

Mr. Greene's latest book, "The Heart of the Matter," should be read as the complement of "Brighton Rock." It poses a vastly more subtle problem. Its hero speaks of the Church as "knowing all the answers," but his life and death comprise a problem to which the answer is in the mind of God alone, the reconciliation of perfect justice with perfect mercy. It is a book which only a Catholic could write and only a Catholic can understand. I mean that only a Catholic can understand the nature of the problem. Many Catholics, I am sure, will gravely misunderstand it, particularly in the United States of America, where its selection as the Book of the Month will bring it to a much larger public than can profitably read it. There are loyal Catholics here and in America who think it the function of the Catholic writer to produce only advertising brochures setting out in attractive terms the advantages of Church membership. To them this profoundly reverent book will seem a scandal. For it not only portrays Catholics as unlikeable human beings but shows them as tortured by their Faith. It will be the object of controversy and perhaps even of condemnation. Thousands of heathen will read it with innocent excitement, quite unaware that they are intruding among the innermost mysteries of faith. There is a third class who will see what this book intends and yet be troubled by doubt of its theological propriety.

Mr. Greene divides his fiction into "Novels" and "Entertainments." Superficially there is no great difference between the two categories. There is no Ruth Draper switch from comic to pathetic. "Novels" and "Entertainments" are both written in the same grim style, both deal mainly with charmless characters, both have a structure of sound, exciting plot. You cannot tell from

* The Heart of the Matter. Graham Greene. Viking. \$3.00.

the skeleton whether the man was baptized or not. And that is the difference; the "Novels" have been baptized, held deep under in the waters of life. The author has said: "These characters are not my creation but God's. They have an eternal destiny. They are not merely playing a part for the reader's amusement. They are souls whom Christ died to save." This, I think, explains his preoccupation with the charmless. The children of Adam are not a race of noble savages who need only a divine spark to perfect them. They are aboriginally corrupt. Their tiny relative advantages of intelligence and taste and good looks and good manners are quite insignificant. The compassion and condescension of the Word becoming flesh are glorified in the depths.

As I have said above, the style of writing is grim. It is not a specifically literary style at all. The words are functional, devoid of sensuous attraction, of ancestry and of independent life. Literary stylists regard language as intrinsically precious and its proper use as a worthy and pleasant task. A polyglot could read Mr. Greene, lay him aside, retain a sharp memory of all he said and yet, I think, entirely forget what tongue he was using. The words are simply mathematical signs for his thought. Moreover, no relation is established between writer and reader. The reader has not had a conversation with a third party such as he enjoys with Sterne or Thackeray. Nor is there within the structure of the story an observer through whom the events are recorded and the emotions transmitted. It is as though, out of an infinite length of film, sequences had been cut which, assembled, comprise an experience which is the reader's alone, without any correspondence to the experience of the protagonists. The writer has become director and producer. Indeed, the affinity to the film is everywhere apparent. It is the camera's eye which moves from the hotel balcony to the street below, picks out the policeman, follows him to his office, moves about the room from the handcuffs on the wall to the broken rosary in the drawer, recording significant detail. It is the modern way of telling a story. In Elizabethan drama one can usually discern an artistic sense formed on the dumb-show and the masque. In Henry James's novels scene after scene evolves as though on the stage of a drawing-room comedy. Now it is the cinema which has taught a new habit of narrative. Perhaps it is the only contribution the cinema is destined to make to the arts.

There is no technical trick about good storytelling in this or any other manner. All depends on the natural qualities of the narrator's mind, whether or no he sees events in a necessary sequence. Mr. Greene is a story-teller of genius. Born in another age, he would still be spinning

yarns. His particular habits are accidental. The plot of "The Heart of the Matter" might well have been used by M. Simenon or Mr. Somerset Maugham.

The scene is a West African port in war time. It has affinities with the Brighton of "Brighton Rock," parasitic, cosmopolitan, corrupt. The population are all strangers, British officials, detribalized natives, immigrant West Indian Negroes, Asiatics, Syrians. There are poisonous gossip at the club and voodoo bottles on the wharf, intrigues for administrative posts, intrigues to monopolize the illicit diamond trade. The hero, Scobie, is deputy-commissioner of police, one of the oldest inhabitants among the white officials; he has a compassionate liking for the place and the people. He is honest and unpopular and, when the story begins, he has been passed over for promotion. His wife Louise is also unpopular, for other reasons. She is neurotic and pretentious. Their only child died at school in England. Both are Catholic. His failure to get made commissioner is the final humiliation. She whines and nags to escape to South Africa. Two hundred pounds are needed to send her. Husband and wife are found together in the depths of distress.

The illegal export of diamonds is prevalent, both as industrial stones for the benefit of the enemy and gems for private investment. Scobie's police are entirely ineffective in stopping it, although it is notorious that two Syrians, Tallit and Yusef, are competitors for the monopoly. A police-spy is sent from England to investigate. He falls in love with Louise. Scobie, in order to fulfil his promise to get Louise out of the country, borrows money from Yusef. As a result of this association he is involved in an attempt to "frame" Tallit. The police-spy animated by hate and jealousy is on his heels. Meanwhile survivors from a torpedoed ship are brought across from French territory, among them an English bride widowed in the sinking. She and Scobie fall in love and she becomes his mistress. Yusef secures evidence of the intrigue and blackmails Scobie into definitely criminal participation in his trade. His association with Yusef culminates in the murder of Ali, Scobie's supposedly devoted native servant, whom he now suspects of giving information to the police-spy. Louise returns. Unable to abandon either woman, inextricably involved in crime, hunted by his enemy, Scobie takes poison; his women become listlessly acquiescent to other suitors.

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These are the bare bones of the story, the ground plan on which almost any kind of building might be erected. The art of story-telling has little to do with the choice of plot. One can

imagine the dreariest kind of film—(Miss Bacall's pretty head lolling on the stretcher)—accurately constructed to these specifications. Mr. Greene, as his admirers would expect, makes of his material a precise and plausible drama. His technical mastery has never been better manifested than in his statement of the scene—the sweat and infection, the ill-built town which is beautiful for a few minutes at sundown, the brothel where all men are equal, the vultures, the priest who, when he laughed “swung his great empty-sounding bell to and fro, Ho ho, ho, like a leper proclaiming his misery,” the snobbery of the second-class public schools, the law which all can evade, the ever-present haunting underworld of gossip, spying, bribery, violence and betrayal. There are incidents of the highest imaginative power—Scobie at the bedside of a dying child, improvising his tale of the Bantus. It is so well done that one forgets the doer. The characters are real people whose moral and spiritual predicament is our own because they are part of our personal experience.

As I have suggested above, Scobie is the complement of Pinkie. Both believe in damnation and believe themselves damned. Both die in mortal sin as defined by moral theologians. The conclusion of the book is the reflection that no one knows the secrets of the human heart or the nature of God's mercy. It is improper to speculate on another's damnation. Nevertheless the reader is haunted by the question: Is Scobie damned? One does not really worry very much about whether Becky Sharp or Fagin is damned. It is the central question of “The Heart of the Matter.” I believe that Mr. Greene thinks him a saint. Perhaps I am wrong in this, but in any case Mr. Greene's opinion on that matter is of no more value than the reader's. Scobie is not Mr. Greene's creature, devised to illustrate a thesis. He is a man of independent soul. Can one separate his moral from his spiritual state? Both are complex and ambiguous.

First, there is his professional delinquency. In the first pages he appears as an Aristides, disliked for his rectitude; by the end of the book he has become a criminal. There is nothing inevitable in his decline. He compromises himself first in order to get his wife's passage money. She is in a deplorable nervous condition; perhaps, even, her reason is in danger. He is full of compassion. But she is making his own life intolerable; he wants her out of the way for his own peace. As things turn out the trip to South Africa was quite unnecessary. Providence had its own cure ready if he had only waited. He gets the commissioner-ship in the end, which was ostensibly all that Louise wanted. But behind that again lies the deeper cause of her melancholy, that Scobie no longer loves her in the way that would gratify

her vanity. And behind the betrayal of his official trust lies the futility of his official position. The law he administers has little connection with morals or justice. It is all a matter of regulations—a Portuguese sea-captain's right to correspond with his daughter in Germany, the right of a tenant to divide and sub-let her hut, the right of a merchant to provide out of his own property for the security of his family. He knows that his subordinates are corrupt and can do nothing about it. Whom or what has he in fact betrayed, except his own pride?

Secondly, there is his adultery. His affection for the waif cast up on the beach is at first compassionate and protective; it becomes carnal. Why? He is an elderly man long schooled in chastity. There is another suitor of Helen Rolt, Bagster the Air Force philanderer. It is Bagster's prowling round the bungalow which precipitates the change of relationship. It is Bagster in the background who makes him persevere in adultery when his wife's return affords a convenient occasion for parting. Bagster is a promiscuous cad. Helen must be saved from Bagster. Why? Scobie arrogates to himself the prerogatives of providence. He presumes that an illicit relation with himself is better than an illicit relation with Bagster. But why, in fact, need it have been illicit? She might marry Bagster.

Thirdly there is the murder of Ali. We do not know whether Ali was betraying him. If he had not been a smuggler and an adulterer there would have been nothing to betray. Ali dies to emphasize the culpability of these sins.

Fourthly there are the sacrilegious communions which Louise forces upon him; and fifthly, his suicide, a re-statement of that blasphemy in other terms. He dies believing himself damned but also in an obscure way—at least in a way that is obscure to me—believing that he is offering his damnation as a loving sacrifice for others.

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We are told that he is actuated throughout by the love of God. A love, it is true that falls short of trust, but a love, we must suppose, which sanctifies his sins. That is the heart of the matter. Is such a sacrifice feasible? To me the idea is totally unintelligible, but it is not unfamiliar. Did the Quietists not speak in something like these terms? I ask in all humility whether nowadays logical rule-of-thumb Catholics are not a little too humble towards the mystics. We are inclined to say: “Ah, that is mysticism. I'm quite out of my depth there,” as though the subject were higher mathematics, while in fact our whole Faith is essentially mystical. We may well fight shy of discussing ecstatic states of prayer with which we have no acquaintance, but sacrilege and suicide are acts of which we are perfectly capable.

To me the idea of willing my own damnation for the love of God is either a very loose poetical expression or a mad blasphemy, for the God who accepted that sacrifice could be neither just nor lovable.

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Mr. Greene has put a quotation from Péguy at the beginning of the book "*Le pécheur est au cœur même de chrétienté . . . Nul n'est aussi compétent que le pécheur en matière de chrétienté. Nul, si ce n'est le saint,*" and it seems to me probable that it was in his mind to illustrate the "*Nouveau Théologien*" from which it is taken, just as in "Brighton Rock" he illustrates the Penny Catechism. The theme of that remarkable essay is that Christianity is a city to which a bad citizen belongs and the good stranger does not. Péguy describes the Church, very beautifully, as a chain of saints and sinners with clasped fingers, pulling one another up to Jesus. But there are also passages which, if read literally, are grossly exorbitant. Péguy was not three years a convert when he wrote it, and he was not in communion with the Church. He daily saw men and women, who seemed to him lacking his own intense spirituality, trooping up to the altar rails while he was obliged to stay in his place excommunicate. The "*Nouveau Théologien*" is his meditation on his predicament. He feels there is a city of which he is a true citizen, but it is not the community of conventional practicing Catholics, who are not, in his odd, often repeated phrase, "*compétent en matière de chrétienté.*" He feels a kinship with the saints that these conventional church-goers do not know and in his strange, narrow, brooding mind he makes the preposterous deduction that this very true and strong bond is made, not by his faith and love, but by his sins. "*Littéralement,*" he writes, "*celui qui est pécheur, celui qui commet un péché est déjà chrétien, est en cela même chrétien. On pourrait presque dire est un bon chrétien.*" "*Littéralement*"? what is the precise force of that passage? Much depends on it. Does "literally" mean that any and every sinner is by virtue of his sin a Christian? Was Yusef a sinner and therefore Christian? No, because Péguy has already stated that strangers outside the chain of clasped hands cannot commit sin at all. Is Yusef damned? Can a sinner by this definition never be damned? The argument works in a circle of undefined terms. And what of the "*presque*"? How does one "almost" say something? Is one prevented by the fear of shocking others or the realization at the last moment that what one was going to say does not in fact make sense? In that case why record it? Why "almost" say it? This is not a matter of quibbling. If Péguy is saying anything at all, he is saying something very startling and something

which people seem to find increasingly important. Mr. Greene has removed the argument from Péguy's mumbled version and re-stated it in brilliantly plain human terms; and it is there, at the heart of the matter, that the literary critic must resign his judgment to the theologian.

EVELYN WAUGH.

Canon Joseph Cartmell Writes—

MR. EVELYN WAUGH'S comments on the theology of this book are, in my view, unimpeachable. Fr. Rank, to console the widow, expressed his opinion that Scobie really loved God. He could hardly mean it in the literal sense, unless he was assuming that Scobie's sins were indeliberate, the voluntary acts of a warped mind—an assumption which is against the whole tenor of the book. Scobie is a deliberate sinner up to and including the taking of the poison. Whether he was damned is another question, to which we do not know the answer. His attempt to make an act of contrition and then an act of charity when the poison was beginning to work may indicate repentance. We are not told and we do not know what transpired between God and him in his last moments. There is the old saying to check undue severity:

*Betwixt the stirrup and the ground
He mercy sought and mercy found.*

"As the book depicts him, Scobie retained his Faith. He lost hope; his first deliberate mortal sin forfeited charity. He intensified the forfeiture by piling sin on sin; and, by losing hope, he lost the will to repent. He was offered many actual graces leading to repentance; these he rejected. He remained therefore with what is technically known as dead Faith, for by charity is Faith alive. Being without charity, he could not really love God; for the real love of God, the love that is salutary, is the work of charity. All this is true up to the time of his taking the poison. What happened afterwards, as I said above, we can only guess.

"Making his first bad communion, he prayed: 'O God, I offer up my damnation to you. Take it. Use it for them.' I do not think that Mr. Greene means to assign any real value to this offering. You cannot do evil that good may come of it. Such an offering could have no worth with God. It is, as Mr. Waugh says, a mad blasphemy. Indeed, no positive good came of Scobie's death. Neither Louise Scobie nor Helen Rolt was morally uplifted by his act. The only good was a negative one, the removal of himself as a source of sin to them. Scobie was in fact a very bad moral coward. He could have escaped from his entanglement by a comparatively simple resolution. He would not take it. His attempt to give an air of moral respectability to his sins

and his suicide, as though they were helping others, was, objectively, pure sham.

"The study of Scobie is done with power. But I feel a weakness.. No man can indeed appreciate to the full the idea of the eternal loss of God; but here one is left with the impression that Scobie is merely going into exile in the next world; in his heart he regrets to lose God, but, since he was always happiest when alone, he will not, in the long run, when he has got used to things in the beyond, be very unhappy; he will have the peace of the solitary. Briefly, in spite of his shrinking, he takes Hell very quietly. So it seems to me. I hope I am not misinterpreting Mr. Greene."

Waugh Out West

J. F. Powers reviews
Evelyn Waugh's new novel

THE IMMENSE sale enjoyed by "Brideshead Revisited" evidently led the movie-makers to think it had possibilities for them too—if only, as always with a serious work, a few things were changed—such as what the book was all about, presumably. Mr. Waugh, who went to Hollywood at MGM's risk and expense, departed, unaccustomed as he was to the high living, saying: "It's a place for very, very old people to go and die." So Hollywood lost another writer and gained another book* about itself.

"The Loved One" is concerned with the funeral business which, as we all ought to know, is neither funeral nor business in Southern California. Given the knowledge that the author would some day go to Hollywood, this book was a foreseeable event. It was in the cards.

Last winter "The Loved One" consumed one entire issue of *Horizon*, the English review edited by Cyril Connolly, and at the time Mr. Waugh said to Mr. Connolly that he'd sent the manuscript to him because he understood *Horizon's* readers were "tough stuff." In his introductory comment, after rejoicing over his good fortune, Mr. Connolly made it clear that he regarded the novel more as a critique of life and death in Southern California than in the United States as a whole, and wondered if many Americans would not agree.

I agree, without having been in Southern California—in this I feel it is enough to have talked firsthand with people who have been there and returned to this life. But I do think Mr. Connolly, in picking on Southern California, is being

too polite to the rest of the country. While he pulls the tail Mr. Waugh saws the horse in half. To these victors on the verbal level, however, will not go the day. Mr. Joyboy and Whispering Glades and all they stand for in this book, at once everything and nothing, will win out in the end, not in the very end, of course, but right up till then. The axiom—there is no standing still in the spiritual life—would seem to apply to the material life as well. The Empire, losing its teeth one by one, is settling for the consolations of philosophy. But Mr. Waugh, who sees the handwriting on the wall as clearly as anyone, is not willing to go quietly.

The book opens with Barlow, a young English poet, and Sir Francis, once a man of letters himself, once a chief script writer, now reduced to Publicity, sitting in the yard behind the Hollywood bungalow they share. Mr. Waugh describes them as he would two Englishmen far from home, on safari. Sir Francis, putting down a back number of *Horizon*, gives up: "Kierkegaard, Kafka, Connolly, Compton Burnet, Sartre, 'Scottie' Wilson. Who are they? What do they want?" he asks, and confesses he was never much good at anything new, his best subjects having been things like "The English Parson in English Prose" and "Cavalry Action with the Poets." Waugh says of Sir Francis: "His swimming pool which had once flashed like an aquarium with the limbs of long-departed beauties was empty now and cracked and overgrown with weed."

Sir Francis is hanging on, carrying on. "English titles abounded now in Hollywood, several of them authentic, and Sir Ambrose had been known to speak slightly of Sir Francis as a 'Lloyd George creation.'" Sir Ambrose Abercrombie, pillar that he is, charges Barlow to mend his ways, or return to England, where it is all right for an Englishman to be a failure. Barlow, brought over to adapt Shelley's life to the screen, has taken a job as attendant at the Happier Hunting Ground, a pet's cemetery. Sir Ambrose speaks his mind: "There are jobs that an Englishman just doesn't take." Barlow is silent. (It is part of Mr. Waugh's technique never to inquire into his hero's mind in a question like this, so though there may be disagreement, there is nothing disagreeable.) As a result of living under the same roof with the untouchable Barlow (Abercrombie's Theory), Sir Francis is cut loose after twenty-five years with the same studio, but he thoughtfully does away with himself. Sir Ambrose commissions Barlow to compose an ode, and he does:

"They told me, Francis Hinsley, they told me you
were hung

With red protruding eye-balls and black protruding
tongue

* The Loved One. Evelyn Waugh. Little. \$2.50.

I wept as I remembered how often you and I
 Had laughed about Los Angeles and now 'tis
 here you'll lie;
 Here pickled in formaldehyde and painted like a
 whore,
 Shrimp-pink incorruptible, not lost nor gone
 before."

It is also Barlow's job to make arrangements at Whispering Glades. Thus he meets the one girl he hopes to marry, lovely Aimée Thanatogenos, a cosmetician by vocation, right hand to the master mortician, Mr. Joyboy, who is himself burning (after his fashion) to have her for his wife. A juicy triangle.

What follows is, to quote from the jacket, a "fierce, passionate and haunting love story," and so it is—if one gives these words their rather special meaning under the Waughian dispensation. It is a love story in the way "Decline and Fall" was penology and "Scoop" was journalism. No one should be disappointed who enjoyed the author's flights in those directions.

In the literal view, it isn't exactly cricket of Mr. Waugh to subtitle this book "An Anglo-American Tragedy," not when Barlow and Aimée are the not very representative principals in that tragedy, not if one really goes into it. But we know from his other books what Mr. Waugh thinks of people in general, including the English gentry, and we expect a certain injustice as necessary to his purposes. The means he uses are often unfair, to say nothing of improbable, but I am not sure that the end is not good and true. He is neither naturalist nor psychiatrist. He would not have you groan with him over the sins of men. He writes what—and a part of what—he pleases. There are things that he just doesn't write. It is his privilege and method. It is not borrowed from anybody, though he must have enjoyed "Zuleika Dobson" in his youth. He sets a scene, starts his characteris talking and thinking, but the reader gets a kind of crisp digest. He realizes he cannot go into everything, every reaction, without dulling the finish, losing his edge. He does not attempt the impossible to him, to his method, and so he is never caught trying too hard, the common fault of satirists. He realizes he can turn just so much lead into gold, quicksilver rather. It is silly to compare him, as he has been compared, with humorists or with "great" novelists. It would also be silly for Catholics to look to him for the kind of books already written by Bernanos and Greene and others. He does not seem to have the heart for that, nor, what is more discernible, the desire. I for one am not sorry about that.

His use of Americanese, in this book, is faulty in spots. It is as though he received good advice in some chapters and bad in others. Here is an American as phoney as the old vaudeville Eng-

lishman: "There's been no single dames all afternoon. I'd have noticed if there had been. Mostly folk comes in couples. Once in a while a guy has a date here and then more often than not the dame never shows up."

Some critics who want everything have wanted to deprive Mr. Waugh of his snobbery, but they would separate a beggar from his bowl. It is the very thing out of which his books have come and, I think, not much of a price to pay for them. I hope no one manages to convince him that he cannot save his soul without changing his published point of view.

Among us Americans Mr. Waugh has suffered. Not so his fellow-countryman, Mr. Wyndham Lewis, who has ostensibly made the adjustment. In the *Sewanee Review* (Autumn 1945) he throws some rather new light on the old melting pot: "I probably feel most at home in the United States, not because it is intrinsically a more interesting country, but because no one really belongs there any more than I do. We are all there together in the wholly excellent vacuum. The sight of the root depresses me: and I know in this country that everyone has left his roots over in Poland or Ireland, in Italy, or in Russia, so we are all floating around in a rootless elysium . . . it feels just grand to be drifting around in a sea of Poles, Lithuanians, Irish, Italians, Negroes, Portuguese, French, and Indians. . . . The destiny of America is not to be just another 'grande nation': but to be the great promiscuous grave into which tumble and there disintegrate all that was formerly race, class, or nationhood."

It is a little curious to me that touring authors have been at such pains to prove "There is no such things as an 'American,'" as Mr. Waugh reveals to Mr. Connolly. It is as though they all got caught up in an *I Am An American* demonstration here, and are sworn to get even, or looked across too many bars at the little signs—*It's great to be an American . . . I'm proud*, etc.,—that blossomed out during the war. It is like taking *Life* and *Look* seriously. A specter, or something, may be haunting Europe; but nothing but nothing is haunting America. Old Indians never die, goes the song, they just fade away.

N.B. "The Loved One" is in the manner of the books before "Brideshead." Mr. Waugh is himself again in it and there is still no one like him.

J. F. POWERS.

HERE, clearly, the "Catholic writer" is presented, not for his "problems," often debated in our letter columns during this past year—but for his achievements. English and Americans could not be better represented; the French have not, in this issue, the place they deserve for pioneering work, and this we regret while we pay editorial tribute to Bernanos, on his death. THE EDITORS.

Soviet Water Project

RALPH PARKER

THE ROAD that runs from Samarkand (in the Uzbek S. S. R., east of the southern Caspian, northeast of the corner where Siberia, Iran and Afghanistan meet), and from the other ancient cities of Soviet Asia, toward the South and toward Mecca, crosses the Black Sand Desert, or Kara Kum, before it reaches the border mountains of Persia and heads for the North Persian city of Meshed. This is a region of pellucid silence, where by day the traveler finds little that breaks the monotony of dune and plain except an occasional ruined burial-shrine or a plantation of saxaoul, the drought-resisting tree whose branches zig-zag, like the trees in some modernistic theatre décor; at night the stars hang low and large and sometimes the howl of the prairie wolf is heard.

The key to life in this desert, which stretches between the shores of the Caspian Sea and the Amu Daria River, is water. "Every drop of water is a diamond," the Turkmen who inhabit the land say. With an annual precipitation of only a few inches, and summers hotter than in the tropics, the few rivers that reach this desert of Kara Kum from the Hindukush range to the East rarely have enough volume to maintain their meandering courses for long, and they peter out in shallow sprawling lakes. But the Kara Kum was not always so arid. Eight centuries ago the Amu Daria River abruptly changed its course before reaching its delta in Lake Aral and forced a new channel across Kara Kum to the Caspian, five hundred miles to the West. And with the water came caravans, cotton plantations, gardens and towns with crowded bazaars. The Uzboi Valley, as the new course of the Amu Daria came to be called in those centuries, became a new link between China and the cities of the Caucasus and the Black Sea Coast.

Then once again the River changed its course north to the Aral, where it flows today, and the desert crept back, engulfing field and city, leaving but a legend to be passed down the ages by the minstrels of Turkestan.

Several times the rulers of Russia played with the idea of diverting the Amu Daria. In 1714 there came to the court of Peter the Great in Petersburg the Great Khan of the Turkmen, Magishlaka Hodzha-Nepes, to speak in cryptic terms of fabulous deposits of gold dust in the Amu Daria which had been concealed from Russian adventurers by the deflection of the river to Lake Aral. Peter I was not one to remain unresponsive to such a challenge, and he equipped an expedition under a captain of the Preobrazhensky Guard with the aim of examining the old

course of the Amu Daria, fortifying it and preparing a report on the feasibility of bringing water back to the Kara Kum by damming the Lake Aral delta. It was such a project that as a youth Peter may have put into practice in miniature during his games on the rivers and lakes near Moscow. Who knows whether that bold monarch, undaunted by the scale of the Russia he was determined to reshape, may not have dreamed of having his wooden ships voyage by river and canal from Petersburg to the Caspian, to return laden with Asiatic gold?

But the explorer-prospectors were ambushed by the Khan's men, and their bones picked by the honey-buzzards of the Kara Kum. Another hundred and fifty years passed before Russian engineers and soldiers of the Tsar tried once more to link the frontiers of Afghanistan and the Baltic Sea with an unbroken water system. They failed again, as did the American firm, Homand, which four years before the Russian Revolution sought to win three-quarters of a million acres of potential cotton plantation from the Kara Kum.

The reason why these various reclamation schemes came to nothing is probably to be found in the reluctance of Russia's pre-revolutionary rulers to promote improvements in frontier areas before being sure of the lines of communication from the centre of power. It was not until there were practical possibilities of extending the Russian railroad system to Central Asia that South Turkestan with the Kara Kum were absorbed into the Russian Empire. The Tsar's military advisers were content to leave trackless deserts to others until they had the means of deploying their forces there. Then, having eventually grasped them, they were hesitant about improving conditions to a point where the areas might attract the attentions of foreigners. The ancient concept that Russian space was primarily her means of defense was not replaced until the forceful mind of Lenin gave birth to the idea of seeking in that space the means of raising the standard of living and making Soviet Russia and the associate lands strong, not through their size but through their economic and financial independence.

For some years before the war, Soviet geologists were engaged in plotting the most suitable course for a canal across the Kara Kum. As far as was feasible they sought to use the ancient water course of the Uzboi, but there were many regions where new ground was to be broken and where the search went on, in sand storm and parching heat, for a foundation of firm earth to carry the bed of the canal. The project that was eventually made public falls into three parts, its objective being the construction of a four hundred mile canal with many branches, to irrigate 1 ½ million acres of desert, suitable for the culti-

vation of cotton. In 1940 the first diversion of water from the Amu Daria was made. It took the course of the Uzboi, where no water had flowed since a hundred years before Genghis Khan had led the Mongols into Russia, and it flowed into three large depressions which had once before been lakes and which are now to become the reservoir from which the new canal will be fed as its head is pushed further and further westward towards the Caspian. Work continued during the war, and the day is said to be not far off when a reserve of 700 million cubic metres of water will be available. The success of the construction depends largely on this reserve, for so high is the percentage of loss from evaporation and absorption in the sand that the canal builders have had to adopt the method of excavating a "pioneer" canal, six metres wide and as many deep, which is flooded in lengths of five kilometers and then broadened by bulldozers while the next section of the "pioneer" is being dug. To have waited until the canal had been constructed in its entirety would have meant a delay of three years between the time the water began to flow from the reservoirs and the time it reached the Caspian.

In the present Five Year Plan, the further construction of the Kara Kum Canal holds a high priority. Much of the work is being done by mechanical means, and the Kara Kum desert provides those startling contrasts between the new and the old that symbolize the application of Soviet power to Asia. Around the crumbling yellow-stone burial shrines, all that remained of once thriving towns, are arising neat new buildings of collective farms. Camels look with proud disdain at the squat bulldozers. In the workers' camps the strains of Tchaikovsky, broadcast over the public radio, mingle with the monotonous twanging of primitive, native instruments, and industrial volunteers are streaming towards the desert from the cities of Russia and the farms of the Ukraine.

The conquest of the Kara Kum will mark an important advance in the Soviet economy. Cotton is one of the raw materials which the countries of Eastern Europe, whose textile industries are well developed, have previously imported from America. The Soviet Union is at present sending cotton to more than one of the lands which are not participating in the Marshall Plan. But the Soviet Union's own needs are increasing and her power to meet further requirements from abroad depends on the pace at which the cotton crops of Soviet Asia can be increased. Tough cotton is now being raised in non-irrigated varieties in the South Ukraine and in the Caucasus region; the long-staple variety is derived mainly from those new Turkmen areas, where high yields of Egyptian cotton have been ob-

tained. Keeping pace with the increase in the area under cultivation are labor-saving devices which are being introduced. Pictures of a machine like a big vacuum cleaner for picking cotton have been recently shown in Moscow cinemas, operating in this trans-Caspian desert land where water is diverting to alter the life and landscape once again, after the centuries.

Communications

PACIFISM

Collegeville, Minn.

TO the Editors: Thank you for substantiating, answering Mr. Simon in your June 25 issue, your statement regarding the "long and honored tradition" of absolute pacifism in the Church. It seems to be a point on which we are more fearful and shy than good Christians should be. There is another long and honored tradition, however, which Mr. Simon upholds: that of confusing these issues rather seriously.

First and last he claims to be speaking of "absolute pacifism," and to that point you answered him well. There must always be a hole in our philosophical armor, if necessary in order that love may have the last word.

Against this claim stand his dicta regarding, apparently, all cos—most of whom were not (unfortunately) "absolute" pacifists. In the Church's moral theology (a subject for which every teacher of natural ethics must feel a certain affinity), there stands today a sound opinion which may be expressed in the words of a Fribourg conference of theologians on war in 1932: "Modern war, that is, war as it conceived and practiced today, cannot be a legitimate procedure. For modern war, by reason of its technique and through a sort of necessity derived from its nature, involves such great material, spiritual, individual, family, social and religious ruin and becomes such a world calamity, that it ceases to be a means proportionate to the end which alone can justify the employment of force, that is, the restoration of a more humane order and of peace."

So it is true that "the Church has a definite doctrine on the subject of the just war," as Mr. Simon indicates mysteriously. Cardinal Faulhaber said that the age-old principles would be the measure of the new facts and that moral theology would speak with a new voice about modern war. This has been done by such men as Fr. Stratmann, Fr. Vann, Fr. White, Fr. O'Toole, Fr. O'Connor, Fr. Hugo, Fr. Keating, Fr. Ryan, Eric Gill, Donald Attwater, E. I. Watkin, Dorothy Day, and so on and so on.

Aldous Huxley once pointed out the incurable romanticism of the militarist. It is on this flimsy basis that I am excusing Mr. Simon's excesses, although I do think that he owes to my fellow cos in the last war (and in the next, if I am to be as pessimistic as he) an apology. Perhaps he owes me a double apology, since I now belong also to another "category of deserters," the clerically exempt. It is really the same category, Mr. Simon—perhaps that will help you.

ROBERT HOVDA.

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: The editorial reply to Yves Simon's letter brings out the recognition by the Church of the pacifist teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, but it confines their observance to those who are dedicated to the counsel of perfection, to missionaries and monks and "martyrs." So that a special class of people who follow a "higher life" are exempt from participating in war because of their vocation to this life. It is our contention that the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount are not matters of counsel but of precept and binding on all Christians.

There has been and there still is a tradition of absolute pacifism in the Church which is not confined in its observance to professed religious or the clergy in general. Since the early ages of the Church it has been greatly obscured, but from time to time it emerges. Quoting the early Fathers has its disadvantages and is not too conclusive—the thing that really counts is the present teaching authority of the Church. Nevertheless, there are such statements as these from the Fathers: Saint Justin Martyr: "We who were filled with war and mutual slaughter and every wickedness have each of us in all the world changed our weapons of war—swords into plows and spears into agricultural instruments"—Trypho cx. "We who formerly murdered one another now not only do not make war upon our enemies but that we may not lie or deceive our judges, we gladly die confessing Christ"—1 Apol. xxx ix. Saint Clement of Alexandria: "Various peoples incite the passions of war by martial music. Christians employ only the word of God, the instrument of peace" Paedagogus 11,4 cf. 11,2 "If you enroll as one of God's people, heaven is your country and God your lawgiver. And what are His laws? Thou shalt not kill . . . thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. To him that strikes thee on the one cheek, turn also the other" Protrepticus x.

As for those who became Christian and remained in the army, a canon of the Council of Hippolytus (early third century) requires "a soldier of the civil authority must be taught not to kill men and to refuse to do so if he is commanded."

As I say these are not conclusive but at least sufficient to show that there has been a tradition of absolute pacifism in the Church and that it was conceived of as applying to all Christians.

ROBERT LUDLOW.

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: The recent controversy in the letter columns of THE COMMONWEAL fails, I think, to take note of the fact that no draft board today would accept a CO on the sole plea that he was a Catholic, a position in which the whole Catholic hierarchy today, and the prevailing teaching of the Church concurs. On the other hand, if an individual Catholic is a pacifist, there is nothing in the teaching of the Church to prevent him declaring himself a CO, but it is a position he must take up as an individual. He cannot pass the buck. The area of free choice, and of the liberty of the individual conscience within the Church is still too large for the undeveloped sense of responsibility of some adults.

It is possible that the nature of modern war may some day cause the Church to state that under present, or future conditions, the circumstances and conditions of warfare rule out the possibility of the just war; but so far this has not happened, and the Catholic CO cannot shelter behind a statement that may never be made. He must continue to say that, in conscience, he, personally, interprets the Scriptures and the Fathers in his own peculiar fashion.

ADAM DUFF.

AFTER THE ITALIAN ELECTIONS

Bryn Mawr, Pa.

TO the Editors: Since the last issue of THE COMMONWEAL contains letters defending Dorothy Day's recent letter to your periodical, it becomes a duty to point out that Miss Day's statements on the Italian elections were completely at variance with the facts. Miss Day wrote: "Christian Democrats achieved their ends by the threat of force, by the threat of civil war, by a tremendous show of force at the polls, armed force, not just the force of the cloister and the hearth."

This is simply not true. Where there was a display of armed, police force, it was simply to make sure that the people would be allowed to vote as they wished to vote. The threat of civil war was made by the Communists; it was they who threatened to use the weapons they had smuggled into Italy, if the people refused to give them the victory they wanted by fair means or foul. Even so, every American observer whose report could be trusted to be objective was impressed by the peacefulness, the seriousness of purpose, the dignity, the calmness with which the Italians cast their votes. I cite, as an example, two radio broadcasts made by Edward R. Murrow, whose reputation for factual reporting is, in my opinion, justly high. He stated that, though he had seen many elections in his life, he had never witnessed an election such as the Italian election. The Italian people seemed to sense the fact that they were making history. Resolute purpose, decision, firmness were evident even in the way they held their ballots. The Pope, three days after the elections, on April 21, made virtually the same observations and rejoiced that the Italian people had given evidence of such high political maturity.

Didn't Miss Day see the pictures of the election in the press and periodicals? There was such a preponderance of priests and nuns at the polls in some of them (those in *Life*, for example, if I recall correctly) that I, for one, felt a bit uncomfortable.

Dorothy Day seems to have swallowed, hook, line, and sinker, all the anti-Christian-Democrat propaganda afloat, most of it Communist or anti-Catholic inspired. That is really sad, if Miss Day is to continue to do the work for which she has won so high a regard from so many. For no great work, and certainly not that of the saints, has ever been founded on a disregard of the facts.

Answering charges against the Italian elections, very similar to those made by Dorothy Day in her COMMONWEAL letter, but allegedly made by Professor Luzzatto-Fegiz of Milan, according to the *New York Times*, Don Sturzo (who was on the scene of action and who has

something of a reputation for honesty and for scrupulous attention to facts) wrote as follows: "It is up to Professor Luzzatto-Fegiz to rectify or justify such statements. For my part, I feel that the duty to deny emphatically that the Christian Democrats used dishonest means to produce more votes, that they have purchased votes in block in the South or elsewhere and that the Azione Cattolica is an armed organization." (Letter to the *New York Times*, dated from Rome, April 22, 1948; published on May 14, 1948.) ANGELINE H. LOGRASSO.

IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Forest Hills, New York.

THE Editors: The Rev. H. A. Reinhold in his letter printed in *THE COMMONWEAL* of June 25, expresses astonishment about the radio talks of Czech Bishop S. Trochta on the Communist-controlled Prague radio, and doubts whether Monsignor Trochta "is really a Bishop."

Bishop Stephen Trochta is one of the youngest, and most popular Bishops of Czechoslovakia. He is a Salesian Father and as director of the large Salesian Institute of Kobylisy near Prague he distinguished himself by his admirable work for the poor and neglected youth of the suburbs and slums of Prague. During the Nazi occupation Bishop Trochta was imprisoned in Dachau, together with the present Archbishop of Prague J. Beran. The reading of the encyclical, *Mit brennender Sorge*, and the reason for Bishop Trochta's imprisonment was the public help he was giving to the persecuted Jews.

In Dachau Bishop Trochta met several Czech Communists who now are members of the Czech government. Even the most anti-clerical prisoners of Dachau admired and liked him, and were deeply impressed by his indomitable courage, charity and faith. After the liberation of Czechoslovakia he was consecrated Bishop of Litomerice.

Czech radio is Communist controlled, and Czech Catholics tried in vain to get at least a half hour of time for a regular Catholic broadcast on Sundays. When this time for the Catholic broadcast was given to Bishop Trochta, should he have refused it?

Knowing him well, I am sure that his radio talks will be Catholic doctrine, pure and undiluted. The question is, how long the Communists will let him speak freely.

VERA GIBIAN.

CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Brooklyn, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I am sure that many readers of your excellent magazine are as grateful to you as I am myself for the publication in the pages of *THE COMMONWEAL* of CIP news items. It's good to know what our fellow Christians are doing to heal the world's wounds, what they are doing in the fight for freedom and the rebuilding of the world in accordance with Christian social principles. We need to be encouraged and inspired. And the brave Christian Democrat leaders, nourished by the Sacraments and the thought of Christianity, are showing us the way to build a better world.

JOSEPH CALDERON.

CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL NEWS

THE POSITION OF 30,000 CATHOLICS IN THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Rome, 6/30 (CIP)—There are approximately 30,000 Catholics in the new State of Israel, and Catholic religious institutions own considerable property there, it is pointed out in well-informed ecclesiastical circles here. There are also a number of Catholics among the approximately 200,000 persons who have fled from the territory of Israel. The problem of their return is likely to present considerable difficulties which may well require complicated negotiations, the same circles state. The fact that the Government of *Dr. Chaim Weizman* and *Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion* includes a Department of Religious Affairs and a Department of Minorities may facilitate these negotiations.

The Vatican authorities will do their best to reach a favorable solution of the problems of the Catholics and the Catholic institutions in the State of Israel, the same ecclesiastical circles point out. It would be premature to consider the possibility of diplomatic relations at this time, they add, but such relations may well become possible in the future, when the political problem of Palestine has found a definite solution.

ANTIOCH ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE POSTPONES DECISION ON MEETINGS

Beirut, 6/29 (CIP)—The Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, meeting here under the chairmanship of the Patriarch, His Beatitude *Alexander III Tahan*, decided to postpone a decision on whether or not the Patriarchate is to participate in the Inter-Church Conferences of Amsterdam and Moscow. The Patriarch was requested by the Synod to consult with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchs of Constantinople, Jerusalem and Alexandria and to hold another meeting of the Synod afterwards. The Holy Synod of the Alexandria Orthodox Patriarchate recently adopted unanimously a decision against participation in the Lambeth, Amsterdam and Moscow Conferences.

The Amsterdam Assembly, sponsored by the World Council of Churches (in process of formation), will be attended by representatives of many Protestant and some Eastern Orthodox Churches. The Moscow Conference, organized by *Patriarch Alexei* of the Russian Orthodox Church, is being planned as a meeting of Orthodox Patriarchs and Church leaders. Those in the Russian zone of influence have accepted the invitation. The other Orthodox Churches, however, have shown great reluctance to participate, apparently because they expect the Conference to have some political connotation.

COMMUNISTS BARRED FROM CYPRUS ORTHODOX CHURCH

Rome, 6/30 (CIP)—*Archbishop Makarios*, head of the Greek Orthodox Church on the Island of Cyprus, has announced that members of the Communist Party

will in future be refused Holy Communion in the Orthodox churches and will be denied admission to religious services. No Communist will be allowed to serve as a lay member of any religious committee, the Archbishop states.

SWISS CANTON BARS COMMUNISTS FROM HIGHER CIVIL SERVICE

Basle, 7/2 (CIP)—“Democracy requires tolerance but not suicide,” the State Council of the Swiss Canton of Basle declared recently when it rejected a Communist demand that civil servants be appointed exclusively on the basis of their ability and technical qualifications, “without looking at their political convictions.” For the higher civil service positions, the Council declared, technical qualifications are not enough. “It is the policy of this Council,” the statement said, “not to appoint to such positions members of a political party which aims at undermining democracy and establishing the dictatorship of a minority. . . . He who threatens the liberty and independence of our State is not entitled to entering the service. Democracy is a form of State which requires tolerance but not suicide.”

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS ATTACK PROBLEM OF LAND REFORM IN ITALY

New York, 7/3 (CIP)—Positive action for land reform in Italy was stressed at a joint conference held recently at Rome by Christian leaders inside the (secular) Farmers' and Farm Workers' Union (*Confederterra*) and the national leadership of the Christian Workers' Association (ACLI) and its Agricultural Branch. The results may be summarized as follows:

1. A Central Committee for Land Reform was founded as a part of ACLI. It will co-ordinate action throughout Italy and help in the establishment of Provincial and Local Land Reform Committees.

2. The Minister of Agriculture, *Antonio Segni*, who is a member of the Christian Democratic Party, was presented by the conference with concrete proposals for legislation to reform the “*mezzadria*” (share-cropping) system existing in large sections of Italy, as well as for the distribution of non-cultivated or badly cultivated land to landless farmers.

3. ACLI delegations from the Provinces of Rome, Aquila, Viterbo and Abruzzi, were received by Minister Segni and Under-Secretary of State for Agriculture, *Signor Colombo*, to whom they presented specific proposals for land reforms in their respective provinces. For instance, the Rome Delegation demanded the assignment of Government land to farmers' co-operatives, while the Aquila Delegation submitted a plan for the reform of legislation on agricultural leases as well as for a plan to enable tenant farmers to buy their own land.

4. The conference passed a resolution “deploring certain attitudes of the CONFIDA” (Land Owners' Association) and pledged a resolute fight against “those forms of agrarian conservatism and traditionalism which weaken the social function of property.”

The Stage & Screen

THE DUENNA

A YOUNG organization called the “Lemonade Opera” is now offering its second season of opera in English at the Greenwich Mews Theatre and I would like to go on record at once with the statement that their work constitutes perhaps the most remarkably enjoyable summer evening of the town. The statement is a theatrical one, of course—as a music critic I have no pretensions—but in their handling of this Prokofieff version of Sheridan's Comic Opera, the company displays scenic style, as well as intelligence and talent. To begin at the beginning, the theater is located in the basement of one of the few remaining authentic structures in Greenwich Village: the Village Presbyterian Church. Astonishingly enough, the air here is fairly air-cooled, the seats are fairly comfortable, and about the whole effort there is no dilettante stutter. The *lemonade* itself is excellent (tart enough) and receives a large program credit as well as providing an excuse for lingering in the intermissions in the attractive white-washed alley.

For the physical structure of the work, the musical end is expertly dealt with by two young women pianists, Margaret Denison and Joan Slessinger; a chair before a small table at the front of the auditorium serves Sam Morgenstern, the musical director, for an unobtrusive podium; and on the tiny stage some twenty-five singers and dancers cavort according to Max Leavitt's stage direction and Allen Wayne's choreography. I do not mean to minimize Mr. Leavitt's contribution by suggesting he has been lucky in his designer, John Robert Lloyd—the kind of rapport established here in color, ground-plan, painting, props, wigs, costumes, and *action* denotes two serious artists seriously engaged. Mr. Lloyd supplies four angled and interesting exits, a number of wittily painted drapes, a number of extraordinary wigs and traps. Employing these, Mr. Leavitt supplies a three-dimensional arrangement of pantomime, action, and pose, with none of the singers hampered by the dancers and all of the wit intact. Thereupon, a mulberry, strawberry, lemon, sometimes turquoise, and always balanced, scene unfolds. It's awfully good stuff.

So far, I have said very little about the script and music and, in fact, the only program note lacking will be concerning the English librettist, Jean Karsavina. I would like so much to know whether Miss Karsavina's rhyming is wholly from Prokofieff's clues. I know it must be, because of the score, and yet there is so much Gilbertian impertinence about the lyrics, I wish I could know more about this American version. The music is, of course, only satirically (satyr-lyrically) Sullivan. It is delightful. I can only imagine that it is exactly what Sheridan would have demanded if the economic licenses of his day had allowed him to descend into prose, rather than merely intermittently rising into song. For the bookmen, I had better append that this story of marriage in 18th century

English-Spain transforms the Usurer into a Fishmonger, sings all, rhymes all, and falls into *speech* only for laughs.

Ruth Kobart's Duenna, Dean Mundy's Louisa, seemed to me most actively to uphold the female end. All of the men are excellent. I will list Robert Sprecher, James Cosmos, William Diehl, and Lewis Brooks. But, in fact, the entire production is indivisible, and so are its performers. I would like to propose handclasps all. (at 141 West 13th Street.)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Our screen critic, Philip T. Hartung, is on vacation and has found a spot where there are no films to see. His column will be resumed shortly. THE EDITORS.

The Labor Movement

Taft-Hartley and the Waterfront

THE limitations of Messrs. Taft and Hartley are nowhere better dramatized than in the impasse that has now developed on our waterfront. Although there are six CIO unions and one independent involved in this fiasco, we will concentrate on the case of the National Maritime Union, CIO (with minor references to the longshoremen), because the NMU situation has most of the typical features plus a few fascinating angles of its own.

The NMU is typical in the sense that it is a maritime union subject to the special conditions produced by the coming and going of ships at irregular intervals. A ship may be at sea for a few months and when it reaches port a seaman will want to stay ashore for a few weeks, sample the life of normal men and then ship out again on another boat.

In the old days seamen used to make the rounds from pier to pier looking for work. Others were hired at certain bars or poolrooms, or at what were called "crimp joints," boarding houses run by dubious characters with shipowner connections where a man could get a flop and a meal and maybe a job if he seemed like the right type. Often the right type was the non-union, or even anti-union type. Certainly the wrong type was the militant union man.

The failure of the old International Seamen's Union, AFL, to cope with these conditions kept it weak and led to the formation of the NMU and the big strikes of 1936-37. Out of them came the union hiring hall. Since then seamen have gone to the union hall when they wanted to ship out, and the men who have been on the beach longest have been given the first crack at the available jobs. This is as it should be. The only trouble with it is that, according to the Taft-Hartley Act, it is now illegal.

Or consider the longshoremen. They work on a ship only when it is tied up at the pier. When it sails they work on another ship if another ship happens to be lying around. If there is no ship available, they don't work. Longshoremen on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, who are members of the International Longshoremen's Association, AFL (lifetime president Joseph P. Ryan), get work by going down to the docks every morning at 7:55 a.m. and standing around in what is called a "shape-up." The stevedore then picks out the men he wants and the rest go home. We knew a man once who joined the union, went down to the docks every morning for three months and the only thing he got out of it was the receipts for his initiation fee and dues. Not one hour of work.

The shape-up lends itself perfectly to all kinds of rackets, particularly the vicious kick-back, whereby men pay for the privilege of working. And all kinds of rackets is just what the Atlantic and Gulf Coast longshoremen are ridden with. Also murders.

On the other hand, we have Harry Bridges, a fine broth of Stalinist, who back in the middle 30's led the West Coast longshoremen CIO in a successful fight for the rotary hiring hall. This is something like the seamen's hall. The first objective is to give every union man a minimum week's work—say 35 hours. After that you can start working overtime. It is a just and sensible system which eliminates the shape-up, a slave-market idea if ever there was one, and the rackets that feed upon it, and brings a semblance of order and security into a highly irregular and uncertain industry. (The tragic overtones involved in a Communist-led union curing this evil while a Catholic-led union—the ILA—does nothing, could well be the theme of a doctoral dissertation.)

The only trouble with the rotary hiring hall is that it is outlawed by the Taft-Hartley Act. The Act provides that it is an unfair labor practice, "by discrimination in regard to hire or tenure of employment or any term or condition of employment to encourage or discourage membership in any labor organization." It is also forbidden for a union "to cause or attempt to cause an employer to discriminate against an employee" in violation of the above rule.

It is an amusing sidelight that some months ago Senator Taft went out to the West Coast and while he was there helped to draw up a clause in a contract between shipowners and AFL seamen. This clause was supposed to save the hiring hall and still stay within the letter of the law, and the expert opinion seems to be that it failed. Its only chance of survival is that nobody will contest it. What it did was to provide that the shipowners would give preference to former employees (union men) and if they needed anyone else they would apply to a school run by the union. Is that a transparent dodge or is that a transparent dodge?

The law is sweeping and unmistakable. An employer cannot, and a union cannot force him to, encourage union membership by any "discrimination in regard to hire or tenure of employment." The sole exception is the union shop, whereby a man must join the union 30 days after being taken on, provided that the union has won a special election, which permits it to ask for that blessing. But this obviously has nothing to do with hiring.

And so we have certain clearly defined and apparent—we might even say screaming—evils among maritime labor. The hiring hall wiped out those evils. The Taft-Hartley Act threatens to wipe out the hiring halls without even suggesting any alternative remedy. Is this bad or is it good? It looks very bad from here.

And now we return to the NMU, which provides another interesting sidelight. Under the T-H Act the NMU has been enjoined from striking for 80 days, which takes us up to September 2. The main issue is, of course, the hiring hall. The NMU is split wide open by a knock-down fight—and the cliché can be taken literally—between the Communist and anti-Communist factions. They are still counting the ballots in what is certainly the most crucial election in the union's history. Everyone, including the Stalinists, seems to think that the anti-Stalinist faction of Joe Curran won a sweeping victory.

The Communists are desperate. They are screaming for a strike, hoping that somehow in the chaos and confusion they can either retain or regain their commanding position in this strategic outfit.

The Taft-Hartley Act may yet be their salvation. It has created a nice mess on the waterfront, a mess which may well lead to an even messier strike. As everyone knows, communism feeds on messes. JOHN C. CORT.

Books

The Reconstruction of Humanity. Pitirim A. Sorokin. Beacon. \$3.00.

PROFESSOR SOROKIN must seem to consciously modern men and women who by chance read his book a writer carrying a banner with a strange device. One might say that it read, put not your trust in gadgets but in yourselves. For what is truly characteristic of our era is that human beings no longer have confidence either in themselves or others. Their world is both infinitely smaller than it used to be, for the Person who is above all Persons has gone out of it, and also infinitely more complex than it once seemed, because the onlooker is confused by intricacy. That is what "science" has come to mean to most of us—intricacy, the discovery of an ever increasing number of variations and implications. And accordingly simplifications automatically suggest themselves. World peace can be "found," even as penicillin has been unearthed. The economic system can be made to function, it is believed, and with that will come prosperity and industry peace.

To Sorokin all contemporary thought born of these convictions is either fallacious or stupid. No compromise can elbow its way into either his formulations or his utterances. Indeed one might easily be tempted to believe that the Harvard sociologist is not at all a sociable person. Many a page is so self-confident that the perverse reader will surmise that like his predecessor, Irving Babbitt, Sorokin may have succumbed unduly to the charms of his synthesis of all wisdom. But for all that the book is unusually able and challenging, and makes two points extremely well. The first is that every attempt by man to find formulas that will solve his problems must inevitably fail. The United Nations cannot of itself do anything which the League of Nations failed to accomplish. Democracy is not more peace-loving than autocracy. Education fails utterly when people do not act in accordance with their knowledge of what is judicious and right. The second point is that man can emancipate himself from evil only through altruism. For Sorokin, however, altruism is not an instinct, as David Hume said it was, but the fruit of religious experience. Much like Aldous Huxley, Sorokin tends to assume the basic unity of all religions. Despite the respect he entertains for the Christian faith, he does not seem to set it in a perspective different from that of other faiths.

At any rate, the failure of Christianity is, says Sorokin, the failure of those who profess it to act as they say they believe. What that action might be he outlines in a final chapter which summarizes the techniques—one might better say the rules—which the great religions have proposed for the sublimation of man. These are the truths by which men might be redeemed. Of that we are aware. It is the great merit of Sorokin to have expressed

this awareness in terms of modern sociological investigation, just as it was the achievement of De Nouy to set it in a context of scientific enquiry.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER.

I'll Never Go Back. Mikhail Koriakov. Translated from the Russian by Nicholas Wreden. Dutton. \$3.00.

MR. KORIAKOV never wants to go back. One can scarcely blame him. The reader need not be told where it is he is so disinclined to return, even if he were to call himself Smith instead of Koriakov. He is now in Brazil, which seems to us remote enough to satisfy anyone anxious to get away from the blessings of Red Utopia. This narrative tells the story of his experience in the Soviet army during the war and of his subsequent escape from Paris, where in post-war years he served at the Soviet embassy. As he says, he has seen the best and the worst of Soviet institutions, and the best of them he found wanting. The chief and basic evil is anti-religionism. This was hard to stomach, if one possessed an irrepressible instinct to faith, such as Koriakov seems to possess, and such, as he asserts, many Russians possess, without however the opportunity to escape where they may give it free scope for expression. Koriakov had felt this need long before his duties as a war correspondent brought him to Poland and in contact with the religious spirit which prevailed there.

The first real intimation he had of the violent opposition of the Soviets to anything smacking of religion and of "the church-going scum"—this was in the day when the Russian government was assuring its allies of religious freedoms in the Soviet Union—was when he wrote a book which he indiscreetly called (as it turned out) "A Day in the Belfry." It was an innocent enough narrative describing the war scene on a quiet sector of the front observed daily from a church belfry used as an observation point. It was a study of the physiology of war, pure and simple. But the mere word "belfry" aroused the wrath of the censors. When, however, they came to a passage which described the fragment of a ruined church painting revealing two Christian warriors, resting on their swords, and reading a scroll with the words: "Peace on earth, goodwill to men," their rage was unspeakable. When, later, it was discovered that Koriakov went to a church service, he was promptly proclaimed "a disgrace to the Red Army uniform," and demoted to the infantry. He was "ideologically unfit to serve as a military correspondent."

Thenceforth, Koriakov's course became clear, if more difficult. With the army's invasion of Poland, he took every opportunity to consort with the believing Poles, and to strengthen his faith. Vividly he describes the horrors perpetrated by the Russians, released from all obligations of religion. The fire, pogroms, banditry and rape perpetrated by them exceeded anything previously done by the Germans. It was even worse when they reached Germany. The succeeding detachments of Soviet troops, deprived of expected loot by the earlier arrivals, committed wholesale rape out of sheer spleen: "In the spring of 1945 there was a standing joke in the Red Army: the first wave got the watches; the second, the girls; the third, what was left."

Here and there, however, particularly among the simple Polish peasants, there were islands of the old life left; and, observing these, Koriakov knew he never wanted to

go back to a Russia in which every vestige of such life was denied. He makes the same distinction that other observers have made between the governing Bolsheviks and the people. The presumed unity of Russia does not exist. The writer sees many minds there turning toward a religious civilization. The iron curtain has been obviously erected to conceal what goes on. He considers his own escape to freedom not enough; he thinks he has a duty to perform. "The present object of my life," he says, "is an important and useful mission: to drill a peephole in the iron curtain." Hence, he promises us a sequel, which he will call, "From the Walls of Moscow to the Ruins of Dresden."

JOHN COURNOS.

Essays in Retrospect. C. B. Tinker. Yale. \$2.50.

CHAUNCEY TINKER is a gentle and courtly essayist—an archtype "belle-lettrist." His opinions are so considered and mellowed as to seem almost anemic from prolonged old age, and airless from ancient head-noddings in a dim library.

The author has no startling literary notions to contribute, but he *does* have what all good essayists have—a highly civilized point of view. Whether it be his candid discernment of the Brontë sisters, or a delicate de-boning of the Pre-Raphaelites, Mr. Tinker is ever deliberate and polished. His "Great Diarist" and "The Vision of Columbus" are especially sharp in their analysis. For the rest of the pieces, one cannot easily see the outlines; all are highly readable if one wants to be soothed, for the author writes like a weary and humorous "vieux." The net result is soporific.

Despite my carping, I would not accuse Mr. Tinker's essays of inducing boredom. Does opium bore?—but I should advise small, carefully-directed doses. Most of our American novelists, particularly of the gangling "Sex-in-History" school could learn not a little from "Essays in Retrospect." Mr. Tinker has a practised ease with language, a discriminating eye for his subject, and a disciplined technique. I am very sorry he is so tired.

ELIZABETH JOHNSON.

Total Power. Edmund A. Walsh. Doubleday. \$5.00.

IN preparing this volume, the first in a series of three, Father Walsh perhaps had in mind Lord Acton's remark relative to the absolutely corrupting influence of absolute power. Certainly no more utterly devastating indictment of the danger of the concentration of power has emerged from World War II. Although the book is devoted in part to the evidence submitted at the Nuremberg trials, the author was primarily concerned with an "inquiry into the concept of power as an externalized expression of intellect" and he made an effort to study manifestations of it as it has appeared since World War I.

Karl Haushofer, the German authority on geopolitics, is the center of interest in the early chapters. Haushofer's academic teachings and his political activities are analyzed in detail. Although Father Walsh did not consider this man of seventy-six, whom he met for the first time in September 1945, as a war criminal, he nevertheless believed that Haushofer's continued emphasis on the "Heartland" theory of Sir Halford Mackinder, the British geographer, prepared the Germans for the desperate effort they launched under Hitler in 1939. Haushofer made the Germans believe that only by controlling the area now held by Soviet Russia could they have any security in

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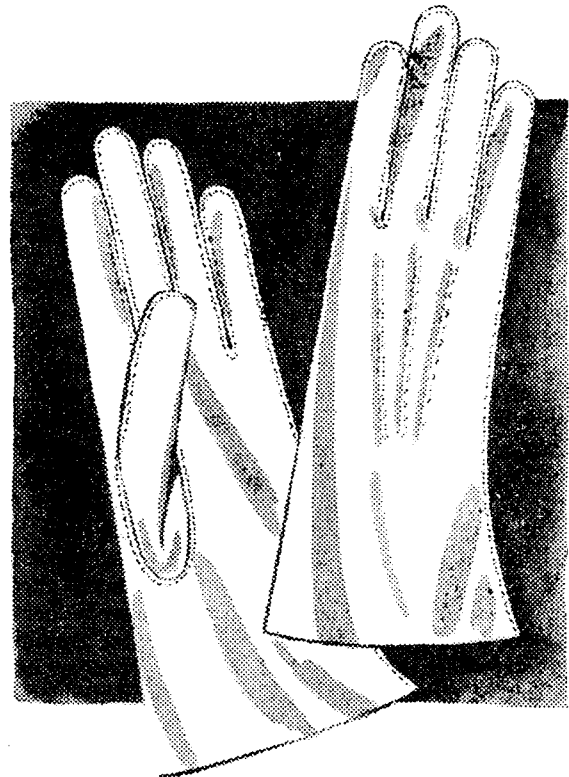
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the world of tomorrow. National Socialism was to put into effect what Germans on every educational level had been taught by Haushofer. This spurious science of geopolitics was to give respectability to the Hitlerian conspiracy.

Although Father Walsh's relations with Haushofer until the latter's suicide in March 1946 constitute some of the most revealing material to emerge from the war, there is much more to the book than this account. The effect of this teaching upon the people is traced in many ways. The Germans were prepared to exterminate any people who inhabited an area the Germans wanted for themselves. The court records as found from pages 115 to 135 in this book constitute an account that is almost incredible. Certainly none of those executed as a result of the Nuremberg trials deserved to live. Each was responsible for Auschwitz where at least 2,500,000 victims "where executed and exterminated by gassing and burning, and where at least another half million succumbed to starvation and disease, making a total dead of about 3,000,000."

The book is not entirely concerned with European problems. A chapter on "Responsibilities of America in the Atomic Age" will benefit every reader. It is simply packed with good history and good sense. This book deserves a place in every library. PAUL KINIERY.

The Baby Lamb, Jean Boley. Dutton. \$3.00.

WITH A LITTLE more care in rewriting, Jean Boley could take a respected place in the modern gallery of American woman novelists, among the Gladys Schmitts, Nancy Hales, and Kay Boyles. Her talent is already impressive, with a nice sprinkling of perceptions per page and a usually disposable vocabulary to meet them. Her satire covers a particularly fine range: the intimate delicacy with which she penetrates the complex armor of a diplomat's wife is varied by staccato thrusts at the crude and vicious chauvinism of Americans abroad. As an example of the first we have Virginia-born Alice Powell, the Embassy Secretary's wife: "She was small and bonelessly tactful. Her elegant arms bent and glided among the scraps of cloth like snakes through grass. There were no angles to her, all flowed—her hair to a loose knot on her neck, her black dresses around her body. Her chic was a kind of dateless grace, an understatement of olive green, black, and unpadded shoulders; its accents—a gold watch, a small brooch—were gentle." But the novelist is very human, indeed, a woman, and she cannot refrain from pointing out to us that what we have here is "merely a remarkably clever imitation of a great lady."

Miss Boley has been unusually fortunate in her choice of locale. The compact group of the "American colony" in Buenos Aires offers an effective unity of background for a social novel. This is as natural a way of isolating a cluster of vulnerable types as one can well imagine, and without attempting to pun on her name we might call Miss Boley's technique of *mise en scène* that of a bowling-alley. The over-all structure is good, employing a simple *da capo* motif at the end with no relenting: heroine Mary Buttonfield succumbs to social pressure and marries the too easily adaptable Roger, so that it is mother Mabel who has the last word. But her word counts least of all: "... it could not be said that she lied. Her mind stood over things and closed its eyes and exhorted: 'let

this be true' and lo, it was true. . . ." "Baby Lamb" daughter will give birth all right, but won't the Embassy crowd be surprised!

This review began with a reservation, and it still holds despite all the good things one wants to say about the novel: there is not yet enough distance between the brilliant girl who went to South America to live a spell and her own creation which came back. There are frequent relaxations, words to be taken out, others to be put in: one objects particularly to the inevitability of certain cultural references. Miss Boley is quite young, the dust-jacket tells us, and there is plenty of time to more than make up for these insufficiencies: indeed, it is not too early to offer her our whole-hearted congratulations.

A final word about the meanness of the publishers (Dutton in this case, I know lots of other cases): they have not only done an execrable job of book-designing but the text is full of the worst misprints. I can only hope earnestly that Miss Boley will some day turn her wonderful satirical weapons upon this sector of that materialist America which she and I her admirer clasp hands in abhorring.

ROBERT GREER COHN.

With Much Love. Anne Green. Harper. \$3.00.

HAD Xanthippe married a mate who answered her tirades in kind, some man might have enjoyed a titillation of excitement where Diogenes only suffered. To judge from two examples of authentic conjugal romances, nothing seems to cement more firmly the mutual devotion of matter of fact people than a crisp argument. The Edward Greens merely reverse the situation of the Clarence Days in that it was Mrs. Green who had the hottest temper.

"With Much Love" is the memoir of her parents by the sister of Julian Green and one of its greatest surprises is to discover that the author with such sinister and bilingual imagination grew up as the baby of seven children in the plangent gaiety of the Greens' completely extrovert domesticity.

Mary Hartridge Green was Savannah's reigning belle in the '70's—tiny, beautiful and imperious. Edward Green drove up to his first party in her house in a coach and six—on a bet. He doubled his Father's fortune by speculation in cotton and for the first years of their marriage, the Greens kept open house in Savannah and in the Green ancestral home in Virginia. When the crash came it was as the Germans have it, *kaput*. Mary earned a few dollars embroidering pillow cases and finally the Greens and four unruly children sailed for France where Edward worked as a cotton agent on a pittance. Mary, who had never buttoned her own boots, learned how to feed her family on five francs a day. The Greens were often cold, sometimes hungry, always shabby but Mary, with her rosewood furniture, her silver and china, created the illusion of comfort and her high spirits combined with Edward's cheerful devotion surrounded their children with a shield of gay security. Mary alternately insulted or laughed with her family; slaved for them; petted and bullied them. Once Mary made Edward get out of bed on a cold night, dress and travel back by bus to the American friends where they had dined, to apologize to his host for having argued with him so sharply. "I confess I feel the better for it," he said goodnaturedly on his return. At seven every morning, Edward rose to heat the water for the tin tub under his bed, then he knelt to say his prayers

by Lucy's crib until she bopped him over the head with a china bust of Napoleon—which was the signal for him to heat the children's milk and bring up Mary's breakfast tray. They were living comfortably when Mary died in 1914. Edward couldn't go on without her and felt forced to follow two years later.

Anne Green's filial tribute is unevenly written; partly biography, partly imaginary conversations, partly autobiography with too frequent interjections of "but, of course this didn't happen 'till years later." The two elder sisters—one of whom broke off a stormy engagement with Arnold Bennett—are spotlighted towards the end but the other children remain shadowy. Anne's universe centered on her Mother.

"With Much Love" is like a garden with many gay flowers needing the touch of an expert gardener.

E. V. R. WYATT.

Abide With Me. Cedric Belfrage. William Sloane. \$3.50.

EVERLYN WAUGH recently wrote a straight satire on the Hollywood funeral industry which came off quite well. This author, however, has tried to combine the best elements of such a straight satire and the psychological novel, with amorphous and unpleasant results.

"Abide With Me" is the story of Lincoln Hope, a maggoty undertaker who developed his father's small business into a millions of dollars affair, with synthetic nightingales in an immense Memorial Park, and funerals sold on the Pre-Transition plan to well heeled "loved ones" still on their legs. His funeral empire includes the manufacture of caskets and burial garments, a stone masonry, insurance, a forest and nursery business, as well as fancy embalming in a special kiddies' slumber room. Since this is a novel that spans the whole life of the people in it, we get a panoramic view of the world up to 1949, as it affects the mortuary industry, as well as all the nastiest details about the hero and his family. The book ends with Lincoln planning to enter the South American market in a great big way.

The author has obviously studied his Babbitt, and tries to explain how small town America lives and what makes it tick. But since he lacks Sinclair Lewis' compassion, he does not succeed—his characters never come to life. His trying to show up the commercial debasement of death falls flat, because Mr. Belfrage has no standards of comparison, either Christian or other. The result is a singularly unpleasant book, even more so because Mr. Belfrage knows how to write well, with a way of his own of making horrible details as real as something white and soft that crawls up from the other side of a stone.

NIKA STANDEN.

These Are the Mexicans. Herbert Cerwin. Reynal. \$5.00.

THIS VOLUME represents the attempt of an American advertising and newspaper man to interpret the spirit and the problems of Mexico today. The author was assigned to that country from the staff of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, being in charge of United States propaganda and heading the Nelson Rockefeller office in Mexico during the war.

When dealing with certain characteristics, customs, and familiar details of Mexican life, this book reveals a delightful sense of humor and comprehension. There can be no doubt that the author regards himself as genuinely sympathetic with the Mexican people as a whole

Dante Theologian

THE DIVINE COMEDY

Translation and Commentary

by

REV. PATRICK CUMMINS, O. S. B.

Monk of Conception Abbey

\$6.00

This new translation is probably the first that follows Dante's terza rima and the length of his line, eleven syllables. The translator has sought to retain the majesty and flow of Dante's style. At the same time he is most faithful to the sense of the original. Thus the English version retains the flavor of the Florentine poet's masterpiece.

The translator lived in Italy for several years and there developed his admiration and enthusiasm for the DIVINE COMEDY. How this devotion grew he explains in his Preface.

In addition to the translation the volume contains 172 pages of commentary; in fact, two commentaries: one throwing light on the literal meaning of obscure passages, the other explaining the spiritual or theological contents. The reader will thus see in considerable detail that the poem is an extended parable of Christian doctrine. The value of the book is enhanced by a DICTIONARY OF PROPER NAMES (52 pages).

For those who have yet to be introduced to the DIVINE COMEDY, the present work will help them to appreciate it. For those who have already learned to admire the great epic, this volume will furnish additional explanation.

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Next Week—

Psychological Analysis and Confession

In careless fashion people often say that psychoanalysis and the sacrament of Confession perform the same function—and let it go at that. Next week in *The Commonwealth* Victor White, O.P., formerly editor of the distinguished English monthly, *Blackfriars*, examines this assumption, showing at what points it is valid and where it is not. As a starter:

"We have only to take a look at what actually takes place in the confessional and what actually takes place in the analyst's office to see that the differences, even on the surface, are very marked indeed. . . . We shall soon learn that the analyst who plays the confessor will be as bad an analyst as the confessor who plays the analyst will be a bad confessor . . ."

Father White goes to some lengths explaining why. And here is one of his later observations: "It is perhaps as prevention rather than cure that sacramental confession, especially if practiced with regularity and with frank and unflinching self-examination, may serve the ends, if not of psychotherapy, then at least of mental hygiene and prophylaxis . . ."

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and concerned with their future development. Moreover, he furnishes valuable information and commentary on such subjects as relations with the United States, arts and crafts, the problem of health, agrarian and oil problems, and politics in Mexico.

In his appraisal of the Catholic Church and of social institutions which, in his mind, are even remotely connected with it, the author shows a lack of sympathy, and a positive bias which becomes almost hysterical. By implication he blames the Church for alcoholism and marital infidelity, reaching a new abyss in his allegation that the Church in Mexico "wanted a subjugated race; ignorance and superstition was an easier and a more fertile ground in which to plant the seeds of Catholicism."

After striving valiantly to find some common ground of understanding and pivotal point upon which rational distinctions could be made, with a constructive purpose, this reviewer gave up in disgust, with the conclusion that whatever good there is in this volume has been told with equal, if not more competence by others.

JAMES A. MAGNER.

The Dehumanization of Art and Notes on the Novel. José Ortega y Gasset. Translated by Helene Weyl. Princeton. \$2.00.

THE TITLE of the first essay in this slender but pithy volume, "The Dehumanization of Art," would appear to deprecate the trend of art from subject to form. But Ortega, a champion of the illustrious vs. the vulgar, considers inevitable and fruitful this "anti-popular" trend. As for the novel, he allows it a future only if it holds to a minimum the "sentimental interventions" of action and movement, and concentrates on acute psychological analysis of character. Ortega wrote these two essays in 1925. Many will consider them even more apposite and illuminating today. Others will label the author a fascist. And he will certainly be deplored by the fashionable present-day critics who consider that the only hope of fiction is to parrot the ambiguous allegory and symbolism (The Myth) of Kafka. D. B.

Pilgrim's Progress. John Bunyan. Illustrated by Clarke Hutton. Macmillan. \$3.75.

A NEW and handsome and not expensive presentation of the Puritan classic, known these later days more by reference than by direct experience. Contemporary editing (Hugh Martin), modern type (Eric Gill), and very numerous and lively page and spot pictures in colored lithograph rather emphasize that "Pilgrim's Progress" is a great period piece of masterful language but remote atmosphere. P. B.

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